Summary

Introduction

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Data on occupations are collected in a wide variety of social and labour statistical collections and are a central element in labour market analysis, educational planning, immigration policy development and a range of other government activities.

NAME OF STANDARD

This is the Occupation standard which underpins the variables:

- Occupation of main job
- Occupation of last job

This standard can be applied to other occupation-related variables (such as "occupation of vacant job" and "occupation of second job") by making appropriate word substitutions to the questions included in the question modules.

DEFINITIONS

Nominal definition

An occupation is a set of jobs that require the performance of similar or identical sets of tasks. A 'job' is a set of tasks designed to be performed by one person for an employer (including self-employment) in return for payment, profit, commission or payment in kind. Individual persons are classified by occupation through their relationship to a past or present job.

Operational definition

As it is uncommon for two actual jobs to have identical sets of tasks, 'Occupation' is operationally defined as a set of jobs whose main tasks are characterised by a high degree of similarity. That is, sets of jobs with similar sets of tasks are grouped together to form an occupation.

The degree of similarity between two occupations is measured in terms of the skill level and

skill specialisation associated with the sets of tasks involved in each occupation.

The skill level of an occupation is a function of the range and complexity of the set of tasks performed. The greater the range and complexity of the tasks performed, the greater the skill level of the occupation.

Skill level is measured operationally by the level or amount of formal education and training, the amount of previous experience in a related occupation, and the amount of on-the-job training required to competently perform the set of tasks involved.

The skill specialisation of an occupation is a function of:

- the field of knowledge required (which refers to the subject matter knowledge that is essential for satisfactory performance of the tasks of an occupation);
- tools and equipment used (which includes all forms of plant, machinery, computer-based equipment and hand tools used in the performance of tasks, as well as intellectual tools such as personal interaction, and art and design techniques);
- materials worked on (which refers to materials of both tangible and abstract nature which are extracted, processed, transformed, refined or fabricated as an essential part of the tasks performed); and
- goods or services produced or provided (which refers to the end product of the performance of the tasks of an occupation and includes physical goods, personal or other services, and abstract goods such as software applications or statistical information).

DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

Occupation is restricted to jobs undertaken for pay, profit, commission or payment in kind, including jobs occupied by people working for themselves. In household surveys, this means all persons who are identified by the Labour Force Status variable as 'Employed'. In employer surveys, Occupation is used to collect information about employee jobs.

The activities of persons classified as 'Not in the Labour Force' (as defined in the standard for Labour Force Status) are outside the scope of occupation variables e.g. persons who were keeping house (unpaid), retired, voluntarily inactive, permanently unable to work, persons in institutions (hospitals, gaols, sanatoriums, etc.), and persons whose only activity during the reference period was jury service or unpaid voluntary work for a charitable organisation.

Collecting the Data

COLLECTING THE DATA

SCOPE

Statistical units

'Occupation' is an attribute of the statistical unit 'job'. Individual persons are classified by occupation through their relationship to a past or present job. In household surveys it is collected in relation to the person by reference to the job(s) held by that person.

QUESTION MODULES

There are three standard question modules for collecting Occupation:

- preferred standard question module for household surveys
- alternative standard question module for household surveys
- question module for employer surveys

The choice of module may be informed by the following factors:

- information needs
- mode of data collection, and
- respondent burden.

These question modules are applicable to any collection mode: online (e-form), telephone interview, and/or face-to-face interview. Depending on the context of the information collection, the questions may be sought of the person concerned directly or they may be asked about another person indirectly. The question modules below are adaptable for either situation and include allowable word substitutions shown in square brackets (e.g. [your], [the person's]).

The question modules below are for collecting the variable Occupation of Main Job but can be easily modified to collect other occupation-related variables by making appropriate word substitutions. For example, to collect the variable Occupation of Last Job, the words "last job" are substituted for the words "main job".

Preferred standard question module for household surveys

The preferred standard question module for household surveys is a set of five open-ended questions and is suitable for self-completion and interviewer-administered collections. The first two questions are occupation specific, question three asks about the employer, and questions four and five ask about the employer's industry. Employer and industry information is used, where necessary, to assist with coding occupation.

The recommended question module for the variable Occupation of Main Job follows. The questions include instructions and examples which should be included to help respondents to answer the questions in sufficient detail.

> **Q1. In the main job held last week, what was [your] [the person's] [(name)] occupation?**
> Give full title.
>
> For example: Registered Aged Care Nurse, House Cleaner, Retail Sales Assistant, Ore Crushing Machine Operator.
>
> For public servants, write occupation title and level. For example: Customer Service Officer APS5.
>
> For armed services personnel, write rank and occupation.

> **Q2. What are the main tasks that [you] [the person] [(name)] usually**

performs in that occupation?

Give full details.

For example: nursing the aged, cleaning houses, selling clothing in a department store, operating an ore crusher in a processing facility.

For managers, write the function managed. For example: managing construction projects, managing a hotel, managing human resources.

Q3. For the main job held last week, what was the employer's business name?

For self-employed persons, write the name of the person's business.

For teachers, write the full name of the school including the related education level e.g. primary school, high school.

Q4. Which best describes the industry or business of the employer at the location where [you] [the person] [(name)] works?

Examples for industry or business of the employer: Secondary School Education, Gold Mining, IT Consulting Service, Domestic Cleaning Service, Apartment Construction.

Q5. What are the main goods produced or main services provided by the employer's business?

Describe as fully as possible, using two words or more.

For example: providing education to secondary school students, mining gold ore, providing information technology advice, house cleaning, construction of residential buildings.

Open-ended questions give the most detailed information and enable coding to the most detailed level of the classification.

Industry information is almost always collected when data on occupation are required. The Industry and Employer questions are, therefore, included in the question module as they provide additional information which can assist coding without increasing respondent burden.

The use of a question module based on only Questions 1 and 2 above is often considered due to insufficient resources to ask the complete set of five questions. However, this option is not recommended as it may adversely affect the accuracy of coding.

It is often argued that the inclusion of the second (task) question is redundant. However, the use of an occupation title question only often elicits responses which do not provide a clear indication of the occupation. Omitting the task question, therefore, would mean that accurate coding at unit group or occupation level may frequently not be possible.

Alternative standard question module for household surveys

An acceptable alternative standard question module for household surveys, which is also suitable for self-completion and interviewer-administered collections, are the questions used

in the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Monthly Population Survey (MPS) and ABS Special Social Surveys. These surveys use two questions on occupation title and tasks (slightly modified from Questions 1 and 2 above) as well as two industry-related questions:

> **Q1. What [was/is] [your/name's] occupation in [your/his/her] [main job/that] [job/business]?**
>
> **Q2. What [were/are] [your/name's] main tasks and duties?**
>
> **Q3. What kind of business or service is carried out by [your/name's] [employer at the place where [you/he/she] work/s/business]?**
>
> **Q4. What is the name of [your/name's] [employer/business]?**

Question for employer surveys

The following question module is recommended for use in employer collections:

> **Q1. Occupation title**
>> Give the **full title** of each employee's occupation, stating trade, class or grade where applicable (e.g. primary school teacher, machine operator, 2nd year apprentice chef).
>
> **Q2. Main tasks or duties of employee**
>> Describe, as fully as possible, the main tasks or duties usually performed by this employee (e.g. prepares lessons and teaches, operates extruding machine, food preparation).

It is usually unnecessary to collect industry information in employer collections as this information is typically available from the business survey frame.

Processing the Data

PROCESSING THE DATA

CODING

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) occupation variables are coded using the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) Version 1.3 (ABS catalogue number 1220.0).

It should be noted that the titles used in ANZSCO Version 1.3 are intended to unambiguously convey the clearest possible idea of the nature of the particular occupation. However, in some instances, the same job titles are used by different industries to describe different occupations (e.g. business analyst). Nor are the titles used in ANZSCO Version 1.3 an exhaustive list of all titles used by people to describe an occupation (e.g. brickie, sparky, RN). Therefore, the *ANZSCO Index of Principal Titles, Alternative Titles and Specialisations* should <u>not</u> be used to code occupation information.

Responses to questions on occupation are coded using computer assisted coding (CAC)

methodology which incorporates a purpose-built coding index containing numerous common descriptions of occupations (including vernacular terms). For more information on coding using CAC see Australia and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) Coder, 2013 (cat. no. 1220.0.30.001).

The ANZSCO Coder is available from the ABS (email standards@abs.gov.au).

Input categories

The standard input categories for collecting Occupation are the 6-digit categories in ANZSCO Version 1.3.

Coding indexes

Coding indexes have been developed to facilitate the coding of responses to the questions specified in 'Collecting the data' to the 6-digit level of ANZSCO Version 1.3 and are updated by the ABS on a regular basis. A master coding index is maintained by the Statistical Standards and Infrastructure section of the ABS to ensure consistency across all applications of the classification.

Presenting the Data

PRESENTING THE DATA

OUTPUT CATEGORIES

The hierarchical structure of the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) Version 1.3 allows users the flexibility to produce statistics at the level of the classification which best suits their information needs.

Requirements for data quality or respondent confidentiality may preclude output of data at the more detailed level of the classification. Under these circumstances, data can be aggregated and disseminated at the higher levels of ANZSCO Version 1.3. However, where practical, occupation data should be output at the most detailed level possible to meet the analytical needs of users of the data.

Output classification

The output classification used for Occupation is ANZSCO - Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations, 2013, Version 1.3 (cat. no. 1220.0).

References

REFERENCES

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ABS 2016, Labour Force Survey Standard Products and Data Item Guide, Jun 2016, cat. no. 6103.0, ABS, Canberra.

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About this Release

Data on occupations are collected in a wide variety of social and labour statistical collections and are a central element in labour market analysis, educational planning, immigration policy development and a range of other government activities. This standard describes how the ABS collects occupation statistics and provides a basis for the standardised collection and dissemination of occupation data. This release follows a minor review of the Occupation Standard.

Explanatory Notes

Glossary

GLOSSARY

ANZSCO
Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations.

Field of knowledge required
This indicates the subject matter knowledge which is essential to the tasks performed.

Formal education and training
The level and amount of education and training required for competent performance of the tasks required in an occupation. It is measured in terms of educational qualifications as set out in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) in practise at the time of the development of ANZSCO (2002 version of AQF).

Goods or services produced or provided
The end product of the performance of the tasks of an occupation. It includes physical goods, personal or other services, or abstract goods such as a software application or statistical information.

Hand tools

Equipment which is small enough to be moved by one person.

Job
A set of tasks designed to be performed by one person for an employer (including self-employment) in return for payment, profit, commission or payment in kind.

Last job
An unemployed person's most recent job.

Main job
The job in which the person usually works the most hours.

Materials worked on
Materials of both a tangible and abstract nature which are extracted, processed, transformed, refined or fabricated as an essential part of the tasks performed. Examples of materials worked on include wood, metal, livestock, accounting data, text, people and organisations.

Occupation
Nominally, an occupation is a set of jobs with similar sets of tasks. In practice, an occupation is a collection of jobs sufficiently similar in their main tasks (in terms of skill level and specialisation) to be grouped together for classification purposes.

Previous experience
The time spent gaining work experience in related occupations or activities required for the competent performance of the tasks in an occupation, measured in months or years.

Skill
For the purposes of ANZSCO, skill refers to the ability to perform the tasks of an occupation.

Skill level
A function of the range and complexity of the set of tasks involved. The greater the range and complexity of the set of tasks, the greater the skill level of the occupation.

Skill specialisation
The criterion used to group occupations in ANZSCO according to the type of skill rather than the level of skill. The skill specialisation of an occupation is a function of the field of knowledge required, tools or equipment used, materials worked on, and goods or services provided in relation to the tasks performed.

Tools or equipment used
All forms of plant, machinery, computer-based equipment or hand tools used in the performance of the tasks, as well as intellectual tools such as personal interaction, and art or design techniques.